

REMARKS

The pending final Office Action addresses claims 1-37 and 39, however claims 7, 14, 30, and 35 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-6, 8-11, 13, 15-29, 31-34, 36, 37, and 39 stand rejected, and claim 12 is objected to.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 is amended to recite first and second central portions that are longitudinally slidably matable to one another, as previously set forth in amended claims 18 and 19. Claims 25, 28, and 29 are amended to correspond to the amendments made in independent claim 1 with respect to the central portion. Claim 37 is similarly amended to recite first and second elongate members that are longitudinally slidably matable to one another. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification and in the drawings. No new matter is added.

Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-6, 8-11, 13, 15-29, 31-34, 36-37, and 39 are rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by French Patent No. 2,816,195 of Taylor.

Taylor does not teach first and second central portions that are longitudinally slidably matable to one another, as required by claim 1. As shown in FIG. 1, Taylor discloses a cross piece (1) formed from two parts (5, 6). Each part (5, 6) has an oblong opening (15) for receiving a screw (3) that mates attachment pieces (2) to the parts (5, 6). Taylor does not teach or suggest longitudinally slidably mating the parts (5, 6) to each other. Rather, part (6) has a spherical bulging head that seats a spherical head formed on part (5). Thus, the parts (5, 6) pivotally mate to one another – they are not longitudinally slidably mated to one another. Accordingly, claim 1, as well as claims 2-6, 8-11, 13, 15-29, 31-34, and 36 which depend therefrom, distinguish over Taylor.

Similar to claim 1, claim 37 recites first and second elongate members that are slidably matable to one another. As noted above, Taylor does not teach this feature of claim 37. Thus, claim 37, as well as claim 39 which depends therefrom, distinguish over Taylor.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicants if such communication is deemed to expedite prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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